

Colonel Muggs
And His
Luck

By
Donald
Allen

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Colonel Muggs, U. S. A., was primarily to blame for his capture by Greek brigands. He was pompous and portly. He wrote his name in big letters on hotel registers and talked about his mines and ranches. When he reached Corinth he strutted a little more than usual. He found there an English lord, and, wanting to show him that he wasn't the only prominent personage about, he cut a swath as wide as he could. Unknown to him there was an article in a Greek paper about him. He was said to be worth \$50,000,000 and piling up millions more, and that he talked of buying up all the ruins in Greece and shipping them to New York as a free gift to the city.

Your true Greek brigand takes the daily newspaper and pays special attention to the society column. It was on account of that newspaper article that Colonel Muggs was taken in. He hired a carriage and driver and guide and two funkeus and drove out into the country from Corinth to "do" some interesting ruins, but before he was half finished sight seeing he found that the brigands had "done" him.

The colonel had made his arrangements overnight, and this had given his guide time to send word to the gang. There were five of them, and every man knew his business. They came upon the colonel while he was eating his lunch on a mass of masonry many thousand years old. It was so old that the brigands should have felt swindled, but they didn't.

As soon as they had made the colonel understand that he was at their mercy they turned to and ate up the rest of his luncheon and wanted to punch his head because he hadn't left more. When they had finished eating and drinking they set out for the mountains.

The colonel exhibited a reluctance to go with them, but they caused a change of heart by pricking him with the points of their knives. One of them could speak English fairly well, and he explained that while it was the intention to treat the captive with due consideration until he had yielded up the money, they couldn't permit anything bordering on the frolicsome in his conduct.

"Say, now, but who do you fellers take me for?" demanded the American, as he was being hustled along.

"We have made no mistake," was the reply. "You are the man worth \$50,000,000."

"Fifty million nothings! Where did you get hold of any such rot?"

"In the newspapers. You shall see them when we get to camp."

"Well, you are a lot of fools, and I have perhaps given a false impression, but it's all being done on cheek. I'll tell you straight that I'm from Meriden, Conn., U. S. A. I'm no colonel, though I hate to admit it to a blimed gang of robbers. I'm simply Joseph J. Muggs, traveling salesman for a clock factory. I am over here to introduce eight day clocks, and I have hardly money enough to pay my hotel bill and get out of town. If you've got hold of me thinking to raise a stake, you are going to get left."

"We shall see," replied the leader, while the smile on his face showed that he thought the colonel was trying to work off old stock on him.

After a five hour tramp they reached headquarters in the hill. Headquarters was a dilapidated hut and a campfire in a lonely spot. Some black bread and roasted goat's flesh constituted supper, and later on the brigands sat in a circle around their captive, and the leader said:

"You shall have the freedom of the camp as long as you are with us, but some one will have an eye on you all the time. The first move you make to escape will bring a bullet. In the morning you may write a letter to your banker, and it will be sent to the town by messenger."

"What in the devil shall I write to my banker about?" demanded the colonel, who was tired and disgusted.

"That he shall send us a sum equal to what you would call \$500,000 in your American money as your ransom."

"Jupiter Jewkins, but are you crazy! Have the whole five of you just escaped from some lunatic asylum? If you want any further chat with me tonight, then don't talk through the top of your hat."

"You will write in the morning," said the leader, while the others muttered under their breath.

"But I have no banker in Corinth."

"Then to the American consul. He will help you to get the ransom money from America. He will use the cable, and in three days it will be here, and you will be free."

"Say, old man," remarked the colonel after a hearty laugh, "this will be one when I get back to Meriden. You seem to have got the idea that there are millions in the clock business. Let me tell you that if we show 4 per cent clean profits a year we are tickled to death. My bank balance in the First National of Meriden is about \$7."

"The papers say that you are worth \$50,000,000."

"The papers are hanged! If you run this brigand business by what the papers say you'll die in the poorhouse."

"But you are to buy up all the ruins of our country," persisted the leader.

"Yes, when hens climb trees. I couldn't buy one old barrel column. Just make up your mind that you're not hold of the wrong man. It's that."

Colonel Muggs was ordered into the hut to pass the night, and the brigands went into caucus. They believed the American to be lying. Once they had captured a wealthy Frenchman who had died them out of a big ransom, and they didn't mean to be caught again.

When morning came there was another slim breakfast. Then the leader said:

"If you wish to be free in two days, then write to your bank in Corinth."

"But I told you I had none," replied the colonel.

"Then to your country's consul."

"He could be of no use whatever."

"Listen to me," said the man as his comrades fingered their knives menacingly. "We give you one week in which to raise the ransom. After that you are a dead man. Don't trifle with us. You cannot deceive us, and you cannot hope for a rescue."

"Well, all I've got to say is that if you fellers tried to do business on your plan in Meriden you'd go stone broke in two weeks. I've told you the truth, and if you are too thick headed to absorb it it's your misfortune."

The brigands were in a hurry. Neither were they in any danger of being overhauled. They divided their ransom money with the it, and the it saw that they were not interfered with.

Nothing further was said to the colonel for two days. He made himself believe that he was out on a buckelever excursion and tried to enjoy it. On the third day he noticed that the brigands began to exhibit signs of impatience and feel the edges of their knives. On the morning of the fifth writing materials were placed before him, and the leader said:

"Perhaps you will write to your banker today?"

"With the greatest of pleasure, if you will only tell me who he is."

"Oh, very well. There are two days left to you."

Colonel Muggs hadn't been taking things as easy as appeared. He was in a hole and couldn't see his way out. He couldn't raise \$200 just then to save his life, and he realized that he had put himself into a false position and that the brigands would hold him to it. For four days he had had an eye out for any chance to make a break, but he had been under strict watch.

Soon after noon on that fifth day a big thunder cloud came sweeping up from the south and brought a torrent of rain and terrific thunder and lightning. Every one crowded into the hut for shelter, and the brigands were cursing, and praying alternately when something occurred big enough to make a sensation in America for a few minutes. What it was the colonel didn't know until half an hour later, when he woke up. Then he found himself and the brigands lying in the midst of the ruins of the old hut. His fellow lodgers seemed very quiet, and he decided not to disturb them. He gathered up their knives and carbines, and, retarding one of the latter, he cracked the rest into a ravine and then set out for Corinth. If the brigands woke up after he departed they did not pursue.

"A-h-h, colonel, but my heart was rent with sorrow when I heard of your capture!" exclaimed the landlord at Corinth as the colonel walked in on him.

"Well, I dunno," was the reply. "You've got to get up pretty early to beat a Yankee and an eight day clock combined."

Accommodating Landlord.

A correspondent assures us that he never knew that it was possible for an innkeeper to be too accommodating to his guests until he went down to Noya Scotia and put up at a pleasant little hotel in the country. The landlord of this hotel had it down as one of his principles of action to give people a little more than they asked for—to be "extra accommodating," as he termed it.

The landlord brilliantly illustrated his adherence to this principle the very morning after our correspondent's arrival at the hotel. The guest had to go away on the 7 o'clock train that morning and asked the proprietor to call him at 6. The guest went to sleep in the calm assurance that he should be aroused at the proper hour.

He seemed hardly to have fallen into a sound sleep when he heard a terrific pounding at his door. He sprang up wide awake.

"What's the matter?" he called out.

"Four o'clock! Four o'clock!" came the landlord's voice from the other side of the door. "Two hours more to sleep."

It is needless to say that the guest slept no more that morning. The landlord's anxiety to be "extra accommodating" failed of its mark that time.

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English lord you want to lay hands on I've been putting on side, but it's all froth."

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